

FW: Proposed Trinitas Development and Varna Hamlet Zoning

[Ray Burger](#)

Sent: Thursday, June 21, 2018 10:28 AM

To: [Joy Foster](#)

*Ray*

Ray Burger, Director of Planning

Town of Dryden

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From: James Skaley <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Thursday, June 14, 2018 9:10 AM

To: [REDACTED]

**James E. Skaley, Ph.D.**

940 Dryden Rd.

Ithaca, N Y 14850

To Town Board and Planning Board

Re: Proposed Trinitas Development and Need for Zoning Review in the Varna Community Development Plan

Here are some facts regarding developments such as Trinitas which has now proposed to build 224 units of townhouses on 7 Lucente parcels with the largest concentration on the vacant lot off Mt Pleasant. If approved, as is, this would result in 663 additional beds. Trinitas is a developer from W. Lafayette, IN and specializes in developments in or near college towns to provide housing for students.

This is a model that is being advocated by a number of investment newsletters given the "steady income" generated by students attending these schools. LLC's are the preferred corporate entity which allows many investors to come together privately to share in the rewards. They look for inexpensive properties as close to campus as possible and propose an all inclusive development for students. **In many situations the development is sold after a few years and the profits and rents go to the out of state/area investors.**

The Trinitas proposed development is nearly identical to a proposal that Lucente proposed about 15 years ago that was rejected at the time due to stormwater retention issues with the site flooding basements below the hill. Lucente's project was rejected prior to the new zoning and the development of the Varna Community Development Plan adopted in 2012. Trinitas' proposal is very similar except it has features that do not integrate with the rest of the hamlet like a clubhouse and pool, gym and other

amenities none of which are available to the broader community. This makes it an exclusive development not something envisioned in the Varna Community Development Plan. It would also add potentially 663 cars that would dump onto Mt. Pleasant and Rt 366. They do propose a shuttle system that may alleviate some traffic, but with the increased amount of commuter traffic already on 366—this will still add to the current commuter load of cars on 366.

Trinitas has several developments in other college towns—not all have been approved.

710-bed student housing project rejected by Ann Arbor Planning Commission.  
[http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2018/05/710-bed\\_student\\_housing\\_projec.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2018/05/710-bed_student_housing_projec.html)

Student housing developer Trinitas went 0-for-2 before the Ames City Council this year after the six-member panel again denied its plans to build a rental apartment community on the western edge of the city.  
<http://www.amestrib.com/news/20171219/council-again-vetoes-west-ames-development>.

In addition, Trinitas built a \$30 million, 253-unit project at 1201 Indiana Ave., which opened in August 2010, and a small project about 10 years ago near the University of Indianapolis on the south side.

**Trinitas sold both developments, the latter within four years to provide it additional capital for more projects,**  
<https://www.ibj.com/articles/51445-developer-bets-40m-on-mixed-use-project-near-iupui>

What does our 2005 Comprehensive Plan and the 2012 Varna Community Development Plan indicate that is appropriate for the Hamlet?

The 2005 Plan states that density in the hamlets should average 4 units/ac., offer a mix of housing options including single family with an encouragement for home ownership. The Plan also states that development should be regulated to retain the character of the community without dramatic shifts.

The 2012 Varna Community Development Plan anticipates in coming years a full buildout of 454 bedrooms. Since the Varna Plan was adopted in 2012, 190 rental apartment bedrooms have been approved and 15 single family houses—meaning we are already nearing the half-way mark in the projected buildout. Adding the Trinitas proposal would bring the total bedrooms to 883—essentially doubling the occupancy of new additions since 2012 and far exceeding the 454 bedrooms that was approved in the Varna Plan. The Varna Plan had anticipated a 1.1 to 1 mix of apartment/townhouse bedrooms to single family home bedrooms. The only new home ownership units are the 15 Tiny Timbers being built by Dolph on the corner Freese/366. **Since 2015 with the Trinitas proposal added: a total of 853 or 98% of the new beds added would be rental.**

This increase in rental vs. single family and home ownership will totally overwhelm the current residential character of the hamlet. What are the implications? Fewer long-term residents to participate in community and civic affairs, fewer volunteers to maintain the Fire Company, the Community Center, and support for the Varna church; increased traffic on a heavily traveled road. Loss of potential real estate for building in amenities such as pocket parks and green spaces as called for in the Varna Plan; increased costs for infrastructure maintenance and capacity for sewer/water, and a deterioration of hamlet character and livability.

**Why and How has this occurred?** There are significant differences between the guidelines in the Varna Community Development Plan adopted into our Town Comprehensive Plan and the zoning that was approved for the three distinct zones in Varna. Largely this is due to large grants of unit density as opposed to the number of bedrooms allowed/acre. Consequently, the zoning adopted in 2012 does not follow the guidelines or objectives of the Varna Plan. By convention zoning is to be based on the goals/objectives of the comprehensive plan until that plan is changed. If Varna hamlet is to become the community anticipated in the Varna Plan then there needs to be a reevaluation of the bulk density and zoning descriptions that were adopted in 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

James Skaley

**From:** John Svensson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 30, 2018 2:31 PM  
**To:** Bambi Avery <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Varna Housing Project

June 30, 2018

Dear Bambi,

I would like to share my comments on the Trinitas 224 unit housing project in Varna. The project is too big for the area and too exclusive to one group of people.

If the project included housing for students, local residents, senior citizen, and disabled, it could become a genuine community project.

Considering a proposed plan from a for profit real estate development firm is myopic. They will have one main focus and that is to make money.

What about traffic? Infrastructure? Available services such as shopping? Noise concerns?

The students will come and go. Not contributing long term to the community. Downtown Ithaca is losing its small town feel with the multiple "high rise" (for this area) building being built without much thought going into placement or community ambiance.

Development also includes technology. More and more brick and mortar schools are being challenged by education via computer. When people stop paying \$75,000 - \$100,000 to go to Cornell, who will fill the housing units designed for students at top price rents.

Growth and development is wonderful when it is planned to develop and expand the quality of life.

Th Trinitas plan is specifically designed to make money for a firm that is not even in our area. They will be driven profit not community development.

As a 15 year resident of the town of Dryden, I do not feel this is a good option.

Sincerely,

John Svensson

Ellis Hollow

**From:** Carol Whitlow [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 19, 2018 10:03 AM  
**To:** Bambi Avery  
**Subject:** Trinitas letter for Board

June 19, 2018

Dear Dryden Town Board,

I am writing about the Trinitas planned development.

I wonder how many “student” units our town can use? The out-of-town algorithms do not take into account the many planned bedrooms already under construction or approved. I believe the bottom will fall out of the market very soon. Could Varna be a ghost town? Is this why the developer is trying to sell 1061 – do they see the writing on the wall?

Students would much rather live closer to Cornell, in the new units on Mitchell Street, the ones planned for Pleasant Grove, the many units planned for Route 366 at Game Farm Road...

Traffic is a huge issue. I applaud a development that includes a community center, fitness center, laundry, walking paths, even a small store. This could reduce traffic.

When you consider this proposal, remember that 1061 Dryden Road will be adding to the traffic load significantly.

We very much need single family homes where parents can raise children with a little space around them and a nice community (Varna) to participate in. And where parents do not have to spend precious family time in a commute. This is the value of properties in Varna.

Is there no way you can ask for single-family home developments?

Thank you for listening.

Carol Whitlow, Varna resident